

Venezuela

I. The "Little Venice" of the Caribbean

By L. E. Elliott

Author of "Brazil, To-day and To-morrow," etc.

THE front door of the Republic of Venezuela is the Caribbean port of La Guayra. There are such side doors as Puerto Cabello, from which you can connect by train with the capital, pretty Carácas, in its upland valley, and there are isolated out-buildings, as it were, such as the new and enormously developing Maracaibo region, and there is the huge back door of the Orinoco's mouth, leading to the up-river town of Ciudad Bolívar and the vast little-known llanos (plains) of Apure and the huge southward-bending area of Amazonas.

La Guayra (a "guaira," by the way, is a beacon fire set upon a hilltop) presents an unchanging face in every season. The steamer manœuvres close to the wall of dark-red, sweltering rock, upon whose feet the narrow streets of the port run, steep and precarious and dirty. The sea is deep and blue against this mountain barrier, and the sun, all the year round, beats down upon the winding town and is reflected back from the crimson rock. Everybody of consequence wears white clothes, and the poorer folk tread, barefoot, the cobblestones of the tilted ways, jostling the mules.

La Guayra Gay with Flowers

The well-to-do, and certainly all the foreigners engaged in business pursuits, dwell in airy houses, with the living rooms often placed upon the second floor, the first being devoted to offices. These houses are built of wood, with heavy red-tiled roofs; the rooms are enormously large and rendered cool by wide balconies, numbers of unglazed windows, and a series of connecting doors which guarantee the

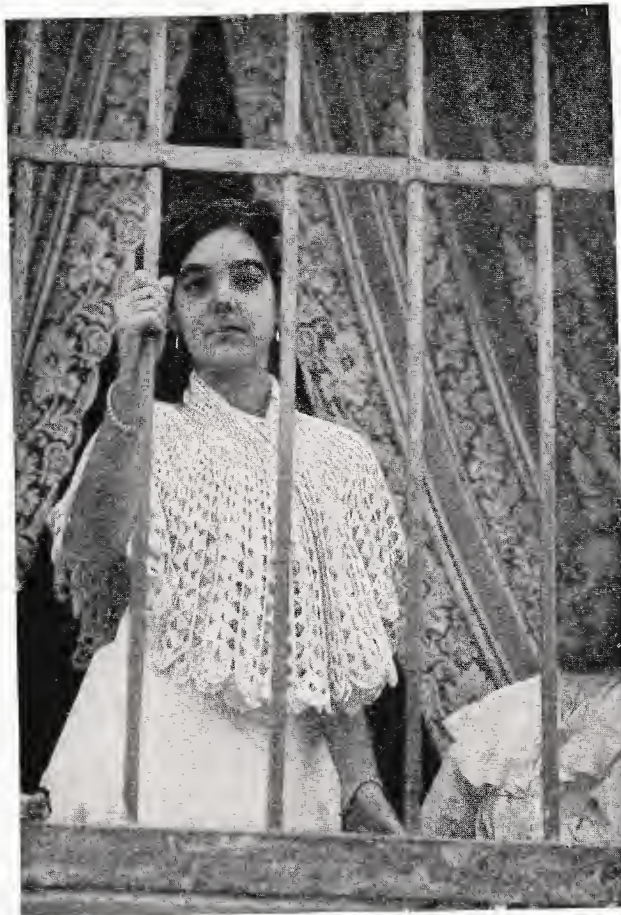
utilisation of every faint breeze. Gay flowers, the pretty pink coralillo vine and the *viuda alegre's* delicate mauve, the daring patchwork of the crotons and the scarlet blaze of hibiscus, the long trail of bougainvillea, adorn every balcony.

When Drake Fought the Spanish Don

A mile or so to the eastward, along the slender strip of shore, lies the pretty watering-place, Macuto. A motor-car, driven by a Venezolano with a bush of black hair and the usual Latin-American passion for rapid transit, carries you along the uneven coast road to a cool hotel and a bathing beach; on the way you pass the four-square white house, inside high walls draped with brilliant flowering vines, where in Kingsley's "Westward Ho!" the Spanish don held the "Rose of Torridge" a prisoner.

From La Guayra runs the railway up to Carácas. There are two other ways; first, the splendid motor road that winds more steeply down the sides of the mountains, skirting precipices and ravines; and, second, the most dizzy route of all, that is nothing but a clambering footpath. According to a very likely tradition, it was up this goat-path that Drake climbed with his band of sailors in Elizabeth's day; it was a Spaniard of Carácas who acted as guide and betrayed his town into the hands of the English invaders. Drake hanged him for his trouble.

The railroad is a fine piece of mountain engineering, and as the train ascends and the fresher air of the hills is reached, you look out of the window and down upon bare purple-red rocky shoulders, with sparse verdure in clefts, and an emerald strip on the shore



DARK-EYED DAUGHTER OF LATIN AMERICA

The houses of the Spanish population of Carácas are usually built in similar fashion to those in their Mother Country. The windows are barred, and a private patio, or court, affords a delightful rendezvous for family gatherings

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where a patch of soil gives foothold to a grove of coconuts.

There is not so much as a village perched in the hills between the port and the capital, but Carácas itself is placed in a narrow and lovely vale with a delicious perennial-spring climate. The whole strip is a garden of flowers and birds, with white and pink and blue houses set in this blossomy frame. Every afternoon, when the sun is sinking behind the hills, it is the custom for the citizens to drive, ride, or even walk, along the beautiful stretch of gardens that border the valley, the Paraiso, which is covered with great

thickets of bamboo, splendid mahogany and ceiba trees hung with a score of tillandsias and lianes, and beds of roses and lilies.

A string of houses edges the slope of the hills, their private gardens running up at a sharp angle. Many are sumptuously adorned, in a land where gay pictures may be painted on the exterior wall and suffer no damage. For one of these, standing a little back from the road behind tropical foliage, the visitor will spare a curious glance, for this is the palacio built for his pleasure by Cipriano Castro, that dictator of Venezuela who once upon a time defied the Powers, and upon another occasion got together an army to march upon the United States by land. All the flooring of this palacio was specially made of fine tiles with the entwined initials "C.C."

As a result of the modern policy of highway construction, in the dry season the traveller

may go right across the huge territory of Venezuela from La Guayra to Ciudad Bolívar by motorcar, in less than four days. From the beginning of the rains, about the middle of May, until December, interior Venezuela is no place for the visitor; water descends in a solid sheet, the plains are blotted out, the roads are roaring cataracts. But in the dry season the fertile country teems with wild life, and the Venezuelan reaps his harvest without the slightest fear of a troubled sky.

No better example of the fine high-roads built of late years and their effect

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upon the enterprising farmer, can be seen than that between Carácas and Maracay. It plunges out into the green, hilly country westward from Carácas, rising to an altitude of 4,000 feet at one breezy spot, Los Teques, frequently skirting the precipitous sides of mountains and dipping to delicious green valleys. All this road is dotted with rich sugar estates, the red-tiled houses nestled among a sea of waving emerald.

It is an all-day run between Carácas and Maracay, and the warm, scented dusk of the little town is illuminated

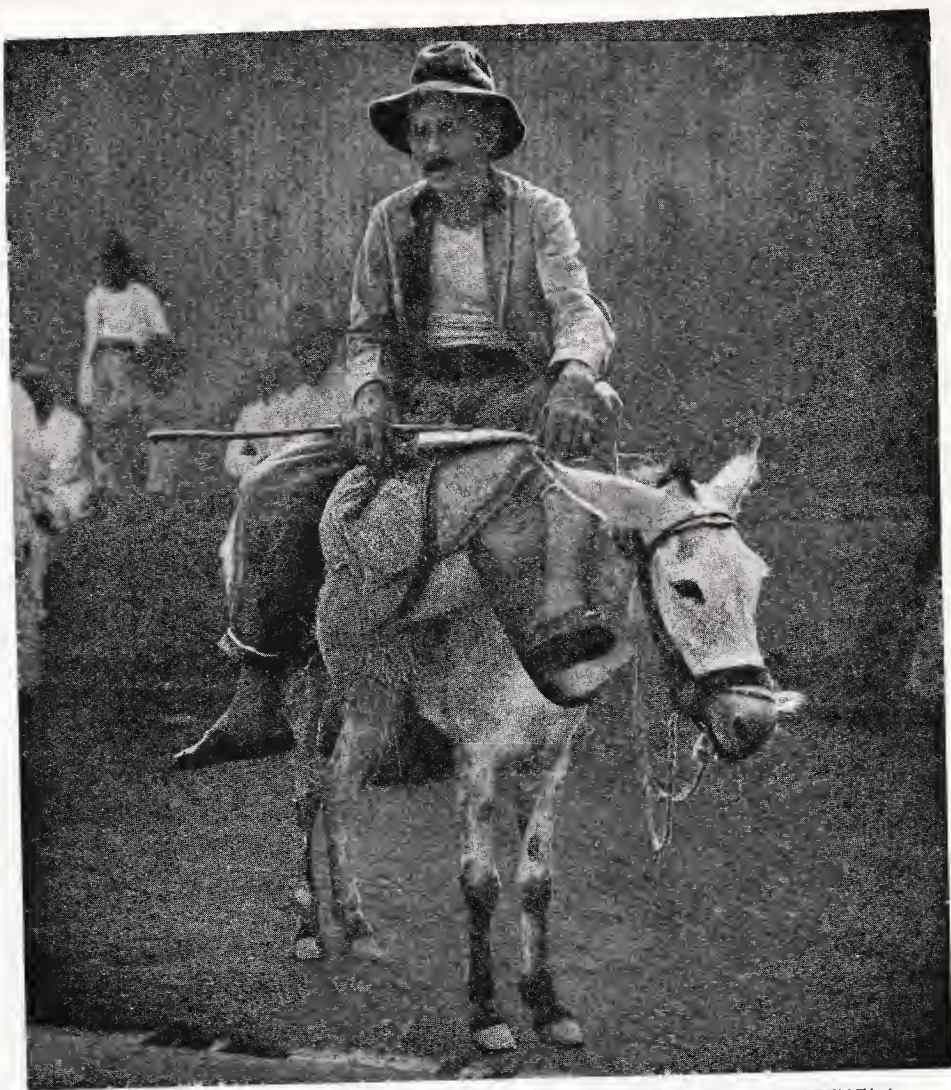
by a blaze of electric lights in the flowery plaza. All the houses are painted with pink or blue or some other delicate colour, the pavements are of stone mosaic, the roads asphalted, and although the residence here of the President is but one storey in height, it is equipped with such modern conveniences as electric fans and telephones.

On the model farm of General Gomez at Maracay, splendid cattle of British breeding fill the beautifully planned and kept stables; at the aerodrome a score of French planes form the nucleus of the military aviation schools. There



STREET IN CARÁCAS SHOWING PREVALENT STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE

Earthquakes are frequent in Carácas, and a terrible shock practically destroyed the city in 1812. The houses, therefore, are low, with strong adobe walls, and there being little or no need of fires for warmth, chimneys are seldom seen. Though alike in style, the houses are relieved of monotony by their colouring, and the red-tile roofs are singularly effective against the mountain background



COMMON MODE OF TRAVEL IN THE MOUNTAINS OF VENEZUELA

The roads of Venezuela are rarely worthy of the name; with the exception of a few high-roads, only bridle-paths are available to the traveller, and these are often of very indifferent quality and some are scarcely passable for mud. The donkey is the chief pack-animal, and is often seen carrying not only country produce and its own provender, but its master as well

Photo, Publishers' Photo Service

is a big wireless installation, which enables Venezuela to speak with points all over the Caribbean. The military hospital is a perfect copy of a European model. A paper factory makes pulp from the rushes growing thickly about the margin of Lake Valencia, a large and lovely sheet of water, dotted with islands, ringed with villages, that lies a stone's throw from Maracay. From a highway running northward to the Caribbean, upon a mountain crest three

thousand feet above sea-level, shaded with enormous tropical trees festooned with orchids and climbing ferns, you look down a sweeping declivity to the blue, sparkling bay of Ocumare.

All this Maracay region is a centre of efficiency, typical of the ease with which modern equipment and up-to-date public services can create a new atmosphere in South American towns. Water-power is plentiful, and since the coal-beds of South America have only

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in a few instances served for public utilities, and the making of gas for illuminating purposes is limited, upon the whole continent, to towns whose number can be counted upon one hand, the installation of electric systems is simplicity itself. The house built of adobe—dried mud brick—with a tiled or thatched roof, the home-made dip candle, the cooking fire of charcoal or sticks, is readily scrapped in exchange for reinforced cement, electric lamps and electric cookers, just as human labour is exchanged for the Diesel engine, or long line transmission.

Before Ronald Ross discovered the guilt of the mosquito as a fever carrier, all the Caribbean margin was a hot-bed of such virulent diseases as yellow and blackwater fevers; La Guayra was a pest-hole and the sister ports only less dangerous in proportion to their diminished size. But to-day, with the vigorous operation of sanitary services, the worst of the fever plagues have been banished, and careful measures are being taken to reduce infant mortality, to check contagious diseases by vaccination and inoculation, and to raise the standard of public health by



VENEZUELAN WATER-CARRIER STARTS HIS ROUNDS

In the streets of Venezuelan cities cooling "refrescos" are seldom lacking, and inviting drinks concocted from delicious fruits are refreshing, though not always effective thirst-quenchers. On his patient beast—almost every burden is borne by donkeys in Venezuela—the water-carrier makes his rounds, and has many customers, for in the torrid climate a glass of cold water is a boon

Photo, Publishers' Photo Service

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regular inspection of foodstuffs and milk. Too much credit cannot be given to the Venezuelan, Dr. Chacin Itriago, trained in England and formerly the head of a department in St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, for the creation of these nation-wide services in Venezuela. In so far as it is possible to counteract the result of an insouciant negro element in the coastal towns, and

House, and there is also a yield to official pockets, for any flaw which can be detected in the invoice of goods brought into the country results in such goods being impounded without redress, and the hawk-eyed individual who discovers the error receives a half-share of the value.

The bolivar, the national unit of currency in Venezuela, takes its name



BASKETS IN THE MAKING AMONG THE WAIOMGOMO INDIANS

Only in two regions of Venezuela are the aboriginal inhabitants still living in conformity with their traditional habits and racial customs; these are along the north-eastern frontier and in the Guayana forests; elsewhere, the Indian element has been almost absorbed into the Spanish-speaking Venezuelan nation. The forest provides food, clothing, and utensils

of a persistently hot climate, Venezuela has benefited enormously from the last few years of trained attention to civic sanitation.

Work such as this, and the construction of the far-reaching network of roads, demands a good deal of money, and in Venezuela the government revenues are mainly obtained from indirect taxation—that is, from export and import dues and from internal dues upon sugar, tobacco and alcoholic liquors.

Nearly two-thirds of the national revenues have their origin in the Custom

from that Venezuelan-born soldier of fortune, the Libertador of the Independence struggle, Simon Bolivar, who, having seen Napoleon enter Paris on one occasion during the Corsican's heyday, became imbued with the same grandiose schemes; you will see in Carácas the house where he was brought up, with some delightful colonial period furniture, and you may see upon the walls of a government hall some rather excruciating paintings of the glorious victories obtained over the Mother Country; and, seeing these, you may



BALLING COTTON IN A SETTLEMENT OF VENEZUELAN ABORIGINES

The settlements of the Waiomgomo Indians, scattered about the vast dense forests of Guayana, are sometimes little more than a collection of miserable huts consisting chiefly of thatched roofs on supports, but providing, nevertheless, shelters for numbers of primitive creatures to whom they stand for home. Hand-made hammocks, earthenware pots, and calabashes lie promiscuously about the earth floor



MAKING ARROWS: PRIMITIVE PASTIME OF A PRIMITIVE PEOPLE

The Waiomgomo Indians, a branch of the Caribs, still inhabit their original haunts around the river Caura. In the more fertile regions they cultivate miniature plantations, while in some of the higher forest land the collecting of the odoriferous tonka bean constitutes their chief industry. They generally shun civilization, caring nothing for its comforts and conveniences

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A LAKE DWELLER

Dull, heavy faces are common among the women of the Indian races who live in pile dwellings around Lake Maracaibo

remember, if you happen to have seen it, the old farmhouse among the banana groves of Santa Marta in Colombia, where the disillusioned Libertador ended an embittered life, exiled and overthrown by the very people for whom he had done so much, and among whom he had posed as a semi-divine hero.

Speaking generally, life is expensive in Venezuela for those who eat and drink, wear, and furnish their dwellings

with, imported commodities ; it is cheap for those who make the country provide them with all they need. The contrast between Venezuelan houses, built, for example, in the airy upland capital and upon the margin of Lake Maracaibo, displays a difference that is one of kind rather than of degree.

The Carácas residence lies not within the city, but a mile or so outside in a garden suburb developed during the last few years, approached by a charming flower-hung road. A broad motor-car drive runs up to the open front door, giving access to a wide, awning-shaded veranda and the cool rooms of the lower floor. Everybody has a car. Much of the population is of pure Spanish blood.

Here, on such an occasion as a children's party, you appreciate the constancy with which Latin America



WOMEN OF THE MAQUIRITARE TRIBE

Near relatives of, if not identical with, the Waiomgomo, the Maquiritare occupy remote parts of the hinterland of Guayana. Convention makes little or no demand upon them and a practical absence of dress is one of their tribal characteristics

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looks across the seas to Western Europe, for all the little guests are dressed like delightful bisque-china dolls in French clothes; their manners are quite beautiful, and they dance gaily among the pink silk chairs. The parents, arriving in the glowing dusk to take away their offspring, are not the formal folk of Spanish tradition, by which the women are still all but secluded. There is an atmosphere of freedom and comradeship and a frank interchange of thoughts and ideas between the sexes that speak eloquently of new ways.

It is true that you must drink liqueur with your tea, and that there are more extravagant sweets than you are accustomed to see, that the crystal-clear Spanish idiom is in your ears; but there is nothing "foreign" here; this



IN WORKADAY GARB

Short lengths of coarse material, or aprons of palm fibre, are the everyday garb worn by the aboriginal Indians of Venezuela



CONSERVATISM IN THE BACKWOODS

In his forest-clad habitat, surrounded by the solitudes of the Guayana jungle, the Waiomgomo fosters the beliefs and customs of his pagan ancestors, finding their inefficient ways of life more comfortable than those prescribed by white civilization

is society that conforms to the pleasant international standard. The parents of your hosts live in the city, in an "old" (i.e. 50 to 100 years old) house upon one floor; the heavily grilled windows open on to a main street, the enormous saguan door leads, through a wide opening, to the inside patio—a courtyard full of flowering shrubs with a pila playing in the middle; a veranda runs all about this patio, with

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every room of the four-square house opening on it.

Beyond, a second patio is surrounded by the kitchen and the servants' quarters. With the saguan door barred, this is a fort, or rather, it follows the mode of Oriental houses constructed for the seclusion of women, the mode that the Moors carried to Spain, and that Spain carried to South America four hundred years ago.

No climate could be sweeter than that of Carácas. But for white raccs none could be more pernicious than that of Maracaibo. Here, along a green, mosquito-haunted, heavily-hot coast, is an enormous lagoon, entered by none but small vessels because the sand-bar across its mouth prohibits ships of any considerable draught. Early Spanish explorers, discovering this bay, saw the same oddly built native houses that you may still find, perched above the margins of the water upon thin, shaky wooden legs, and constructed of wood and palm-thatch.

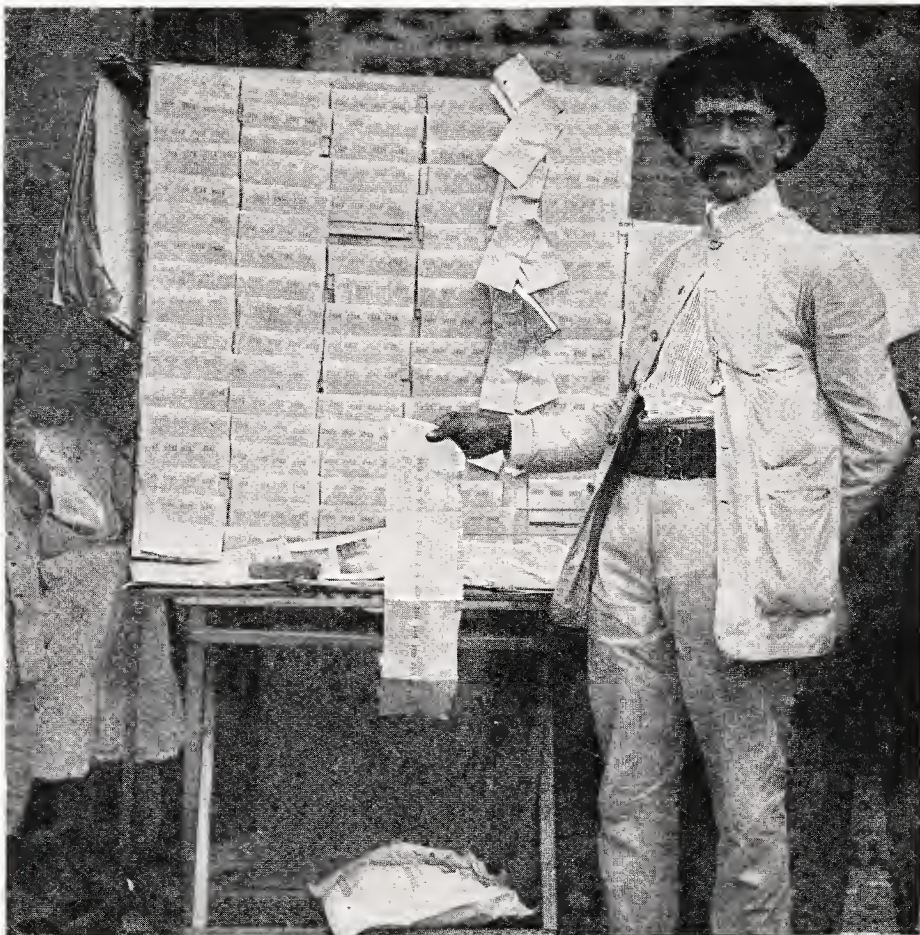
A primitive ladder, consisting sometimes of nothing more than a stout, notched bamboo pole, leads to this crow's nest, and it was the sight of these lake-dwellings that gave the region the ironical name of Venezuela—"Little Venice." Cassava root, plantains, beans and fish form the staple foods, the hammock is the chief article of furniture, and the villagers inherit much of the blood of the real natives of the country, those implacable "Indians" whose immense bows and poisoned arrows are still feared by the traveller who ventures into the deep interior.

To-day these lake dwellers look down upon scenes of activity that bid fair to affect the life of all Venezuela. For it has been discovered that the great oil belt that lies all across the north of South America, from exterior islands such as Barbados to promontories in Ecuador, has formed huge deposits in the Maracaibo region. For years a keen competition between rival great companies has been fought upon



SULTRY AFTERNOON IN THE MAIN STREET OF PUERTO CABELLO

Puerto Cabello, lying to the west of La Guayra, the port of Carácas, is practically at sea-level and is extremely hot. It has a considerable export trade and its harbour is one of the best in Venezuela; even the name, meaning Hair Port, was bestowed by the Spaniards to signify that a ship could be held with a hair in its tranquil waters



LOTTERY TICKETS FOR THE MANY, LUCKY TICKETS FOR THE FEW

Large public gambling schemes are in vogue in many of the cities of South America. Some governments have suppressed them as being injurious to the public good, while other legislatures authorise lotteries in order to devote their proceeds to public improvements. In Venezuela these games of chance are very popular and at La Guayra there is a church which was built by the sale of lottery tickets

Photo, Publishers' Photo Service

this sweltering soil. All over the heat-hazed swamps near the lagoon, armies of geologists and engineers and road-makers have been brought in; thousands of tons of machinery, endless loads of construction material, carried into the bush and brought into service. Huge territories as big as Balkan kingdoms have been surveyed, probed, made to yield their underground stores of oil. Ten years of preparatory work and four or five millions of pounds sterling have paved the way for the stream of petroleum just commencing.

One thousand Venezuelans are labourers in this field, and the native-

born, dark-skinned, dark-eyed, part Indian, part negro, with a dash of Spanish, has accustomed himself to regular hours and sustained toil. Wherever, in the colonial period, land was found suitable for sugar-cane crops, African slaves were imported, and the gregarious negro is still clustered in the same spots. He works as readily in the oil-fields as upon agricultural lands, and when you see him engaged in half a score of other occupations in Venezuela you cannot deny his versatility.

In the miasmic swamp of Lake Bermudez the men work up to their waists in water, digging out the oozy

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asphalt; just across a strip of sea from the port of Cumaná is the pretty island of Margarita, where pearl-divers fetch up gems to the value of half a million bolívares annually; in the dry zones the collectors of the divi-divi pods, for tanning, fill thousands of sacks; the cocoa and coffee plantations call for another class of skill. Near Carúpano is a copra and coir factory; in the deep forest near Ciudad Bolívar on the Orinoco are the gatherers of balata (rubber), and of the chicle used for chewing-gum.

Profitable Egret Plumes

The fearless riders of the llanos, those wide plains which are only equalled by the pampas of Argentina, are expert cattlemen; there is the nucleus of a mercantile marine in the Venezuelan owned and operated steamship line which has the monopoly of navigation of the river Orinoco, and there is a unique occupation of certain interior regions near water—that of the men who tend the garzeros.

The garza is a bird of the heron family yielding the dainty white feathers known as egrets, grown and shed in the breeding season. These birds come annually to well-known open, watered areas in such numbers that the ground is white as snow when they settle, and the locality, the garzero, is defined by law and patrolled by armed watchers for the birds' protection. The same authorised guards collect the dropped feathers at the end of the season; any man found selling the feathers without a licence is sent to gaol.

Religion and Strong Family Ties

The Venezuelan, apart from the civic centres, is a tough, open-air, individual, temperate, inclined to piety, accustomed to the lack of many comforts which are necessities in other climes. The part that women play in Venezuelan affairs, whether in a beautiful house in Carácas or a hut on a river bank, is purely domestic;

the woman worker is practically unknown, and the feminist movement in Venezuela is not perceptible.

The hold of the Roman Catholic church is strong upon the womenfolk and they are as a rule perfectly contented with the interests of their large families. Here, as in many other parts of South America, relatives have a close call upon each other, and there is no out-of-work member of a family who cannot transfer his hammock and his wife and offspring to the house of a cousin or uncle, sure of receiving a welcome until he gets another job, when he will probably receive in like manner half a dozen relatives of his spouse.

With two chief exceptions, the centres of population of Venezuela are clustered close to the Caribbean. They are ports, with their backs to the vast national territory. Here is the asphalt port, Cristobal Colon; Guanta, shipping coal from the state-owned mines; Puerto Cabello, with its British-owned frozen-meat factory, drawing supplies from the cattle plains; Maracaibo, sending out sugar and oil, and Colombia's coffee from the Bucaramanga region; La Guayra, doing the chief business of the country; La Vela, Cumaná, Carúpano, shipping coconut fibre and copra and pearls and the famous rum, the ron añejo sold in every cantina.

Damp and Deadly Hinterland

Behind lies a huge region, with great areas of water-threaded forest that are almost as they were in the Stone Age, where the trader seeking supplies of serrapia (tonka beans) and balata rubber takes to the river roads, in native piragua or curial (dug-out), his life in his hands. He fears the ubiquitous biting insects of the sweltering, encompassing forest as much as he fears the blow-gun and the curare poison of the wild Ventuari Indians; he risks death in the many cataracts of the Orinoco's tributaries, or in an encounter with the caiman (alligator) that infests these banks. The headquarters of this trading

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is the odd river-port of Ciudad Bolivar, situate three hundred miles from the Orinoco's mouth and fifty miles above the junction of the Caroni, that runs from the south and the legend-haunted mountains of Pacaraima; wood-built, cobble-paved, electric-lit, the town lies steeply on the river bank, a precarious, jungle-surrounded stronghold, where gambling runs high and lives are cheap.

The llanos, the cattle plains where the gauchos are bred, and the fine hilly country from which the rivers run, form another world. The trading centre for the stock-breeder of the plains is San Fernando de Apure, far removed from gracious, bedecked, Europeanised Caracas by more than mileage.

With a population of about seven persons to each square mile Venezuela will be for many generations a "new" country, with plenty of room to grow; so new, indeed is she, that only now are her boundaries being definitely

inscribed. With Brazil and with British Guiana a definite conclusion was reached last century; but the question with Colombia has only recently been settled two commissions of Swiss experts.

The country is divided into three separate zones: the mountainous, the plain, and the forest region. Of these, the first is formed by an arm of the Andes range which passes through Trujillo and Tachira, and along the sea-line to the Paria peninsula; the region of the plains extends to the margin of the giant Orinoco river; and the forest area from the right bank of that river to the frontier of Brazil. In the first the climate is very variable, from cold to salubrious; in the second it is for the most part warm and healthy; and in the forests, tropical and unhealthy. The chief mountain peaks are the Sierra Nevada (16,437 feet), Naiguata and Maraguata. Volcanoes are absent, but thermal springs exist.



CLEANING ORCHIDS IN A FOREST OF TROPICAL VENEZUELA

Venezuela lies wholly within the tropics, and fully one half of the country is forest, penetrable only with considerable difficulty. These dense forests, much choked with undergrowth, abound in wild life, and among the exuberant tangled greenery orchids flourish abundantly. Here the orchid-lover can find numerous fantastic flowers in glowing and exquisite colours

Venezuela

II. Chequered Story of a Latin Republic

By W. H. Koebel

Author of "The South Americans," "Central America," etc.

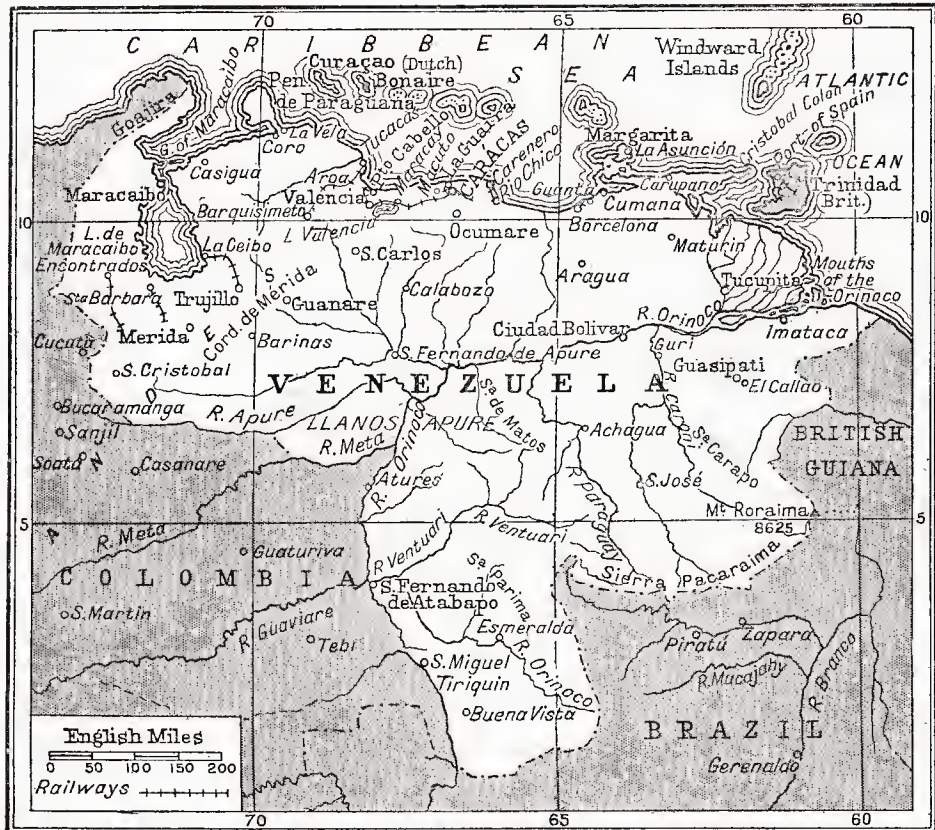
THE Venezuelan coast was discovered by Columbus on August 1, 1498, and explored in the following year by Alonso de Ojeda, who gave the country the name of "Little Venice," from the fact that on one of the inlets he discovered a village built on piles.

Venezuela became the Captaincy-general of Carácas, and the Spanish conquest was complete by A.D. 1600. The country was administered by a succession of viceroys for about two centuries, ending with Vicente Emparan. On April 19, 1810, this official was deposed by Simon Bolivar, himself a native of Carácas. The Declaration of Independence was issued in that city on July 5, 1811, and a decade of warfare with the Spanish power ensued. This was ended by Bolivar's great victory of Carabobo (June 24, 1821), though

Spain did not formally acknowledge Venezuela's independence until 1845. A Republican Constitution was enacted on June 13, 1814.

For some years Venezuela constituted, with Colombia and Ecuador, the Republic of Colombia; but, largely owing to the influence of General José Paez, the Venezuelans broke away from the union in 1829 to become a separate Republic. Paez was practically dictator from 1830 to 1849, in which year he was expelled by General José Tadeo Monagas. The latter, with his brother José Gregorio, ruled the country until 1858, one of their decrees enacting the abolition of native slavery (1854).

Their overthrow was the signal for civil war, and General Juan Falcón established himself as dictator (1863-68). His regime



THE REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

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was one of misgovernment and bloodshed until his expulsion. In 1869 Antonio Guzman Blanco established himself as dictator, and his rule lasted for twenty years. He contrived that a partisan of his own should always be returned to the presidential chair, until in 1889 a counter-revolution broke out. Blanco and his own nominee, Rojas Paul, were driven out, and a popular election returned Andueza Palacio as president.

A partial reform of the constitution included the extension of the presidential term from two to four years. In an attempt to apply this extension to himself, Palacio came into conflict with a faction headed by General Crespo as president for four years. His term of office was chiefly memorable for a serious dispute with Great Britain.

For many years the frontiers of British Guiana and Venezuela had been in dispute, and in 1895 matters culminated in the arrest by Venezuelan officials of two British Guiana police officers. Following this, President Crespo invoked the assistance of the United States in any possible quarrel with Great Britain, and the American President (Grover Cleveland) informed Congress, in a message of December 18, 1895, that any attempt by England to settle the boundary problem without arbitration would be regarded seriously by the U.S. government.

This declaration was the cause of intense excitement in Venezuela, where a boycott of British goods was declared and diplomatic relations were broken off. Relations were resumed in 1897, and two years later the boundary question was settled by arbitration and an indemnity paid by Venezuela to the arrested British Guiana officials. Meanwhile, an attempt to overthrow Crespo, instigated by Blanco's old partisan, Rojas Paul, was frustrated

in 1895 after considerable bloodshed. Crespo resigned office in 1898, to meet with a tragic fate. His successor, Señor Andrade, proved unpopular, and Crespo, while leading the government forces in an attempt to restore order, was killed. In 1900 Andrade was deposed, and a dictatorship was reimposed by General Castro (1900-8). A reversion to the former state of chaos took place, speculation was rife, and in 1903 Great Britain, Germany, and Italy found it necessary to take joint naval action against Venezuela in the interest of bondholders belonging to their respective nationalities.

The Venezuelan seaboard was blockaded, but eventually the Hague Tribunal decided that about £700,000 should be paid in settlement of the British, Italian, and German claims. Castro now refused the United States request for a revision of the so-called "Olcott Award" for the Orinoco Steamship Company, and in 1906 forbade the French Minister to land, claiming that he had broken the guarantee laws; France thereupon severed relations.

In 1908, a peremptory demand by Castro to the Netherlands government, on the ground that Venezuelan refugees had found asylum in the island of Curacoa, was answered by a Dutch naval demonstration. This destroyed Castro's so-called fleet and blockaded the ports. At the close of 1908, the dictator quitted Carácas for Europe on the plea of ill-health, and a revolution which broke out in the capital resulted, in 1910, in the election as president of General Juan Vicente Gómez. Under his administration tranquillity was restored to Venezuela, and far better economic and other conditions prevailed. The troubles incidental to the Great War of 1914-18 were surmounted, and the Republic preserved a correct attitude throughout the struggle.

VENEZUELA: FACTS AND FIGURES

The Country

Venezuela is bounded north by the Caribbean Sea, south by Brazil, east by British Guiana, and west by Colombia. In the west are the Andes and their extension eastwards along the Caribbean coast, which is fringed by some 70 islands. Running across the country from the south-west is the Orinoco with more than 400 affluents. To the north of this river are great open plains, while to the south of it is a great tropical forest. Climate varies considerably owing to the differing altitudes of the land configuration. Total area estimated at about 600,000 square miles; estimated population 2,400,000.

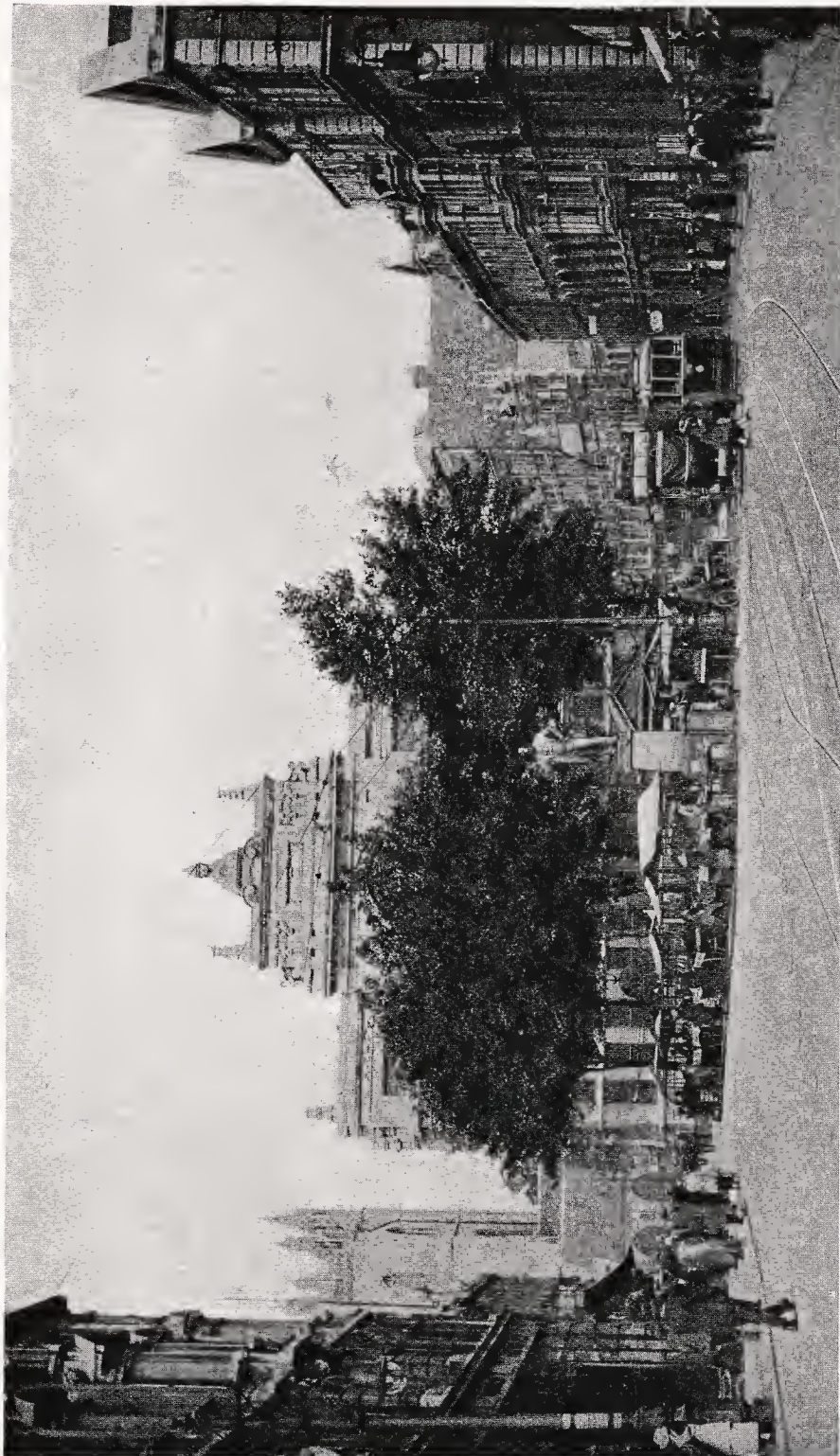
Government and Constitution

Congress holds legislative authority and comprises a Senate and Chamber of Deputies, the Senate having forty members, two for every state, chosen for three years, while there is a deputy for every 35,000 inhabitants in each state, chosen for three years, a surplus of 15,000 entitling a state

to a second deputy. Executive power is in the hands of the President, elected for seven years, in cooperation with a Cabinet.

Commerce and Industries

Of the three districts into which the country is geographically divided the first is agricultural, and produces cocoa, coffee, cotton, maize, and sugar-cane, giving employment to about one-fifth of the population; the second provides land suitable for stock-raising; while the third, a forest region, yields balata, a rubber-like gum, vanilla, and rubber. Gold is mined south-east of Ciudad Bolívar, and coal, salt, and asphalt are worked. Pearl-fishing is carried on round the island of Margarita. The most important industries are the manufacture of cotton, fibre sacks, glass, and matches. Among the chief exports are coffee, cocoa, hides, and gold, the total exports for 1920-21 being valued at £4,708,961, while imports for same year reached a total of £7,560,080. Standard coin, the silver bolívar; nominal value 93d.



CULTURE AND RELIGION IN INDUSTRIAL CARDIFF: THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AND S. JOHN'S CHURCH

Intelligence and forethought on the part of the municipal authorities have been of great benefit to Cardiff in its rapid modern expansion. All the industrial works are grouped about the docks below the town, which is made attractive by open spaces, many trees, and good architecture. Here in the Hayes are shown the public library built in 1894, and on the left the tower of the church of S. John Baptist, the most notable monument of medieval Cardiff with the exception of the castle.

This tower was erected in 1473 by Lady Ann Nevill, daughter of Warwick the King-maker

Photo, Charles Reid